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*Sanskrit Kabāiras or Kubāiras and Greek Kabeiros.*¹—

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The phonetic equivalence of the Greek and earlier Sanskrit forms is patent and has already been noted by Professor Wackernagel (KZ. 41, p. 314 ff.), who explains the labialization in the later Sanskrit form as due to the proximity of the labial consonant. The difficulty in the identification has lain in the apparently incongruous character of the two spirits.

In preparing a manual of Hindu mythology I have recently been impressed with the fact that the incongruity is more apparent than real. The variant Ko-beiros, which Hesychius identifies with the kobalt or gobelinus ordinarily called Kobālos was originally one with the form Ka-beiros. That is to say, the house-spirit full of tricks was at first not differentiated from the gnome of the mountain-caves, *kybēla*. The chthonic mountain-mother abstracted from the caves is Kybēlē (Kybēlē). I shall give no analysis of the character of the Greek spirit. The tricky troll of the Athenian home, the mysterious gnome of the mountain caves, with his phallic characteristics, his affinity with the worker in iron and fire, the hoarder of treasure connected with the god of luck, finally the mystery and revelling of the Kabeiros—these need only to be mentioned to be recalled. But as for Kabāiras or Kubēras, who would think of him as capable of being interpreted in the same way, I venture to add even described with the same words?

The fact is, however, that Sanskrit scholars are obliged to depend in large part for their understanding of Hindu gods upon statements made in comparatively late literature, and when these statements are united in the current mythological handbooks with other data drawn at random from Vedic and

¹ This paper was read at the Meeting of the Oriental Congress—Athens. April, 1912.

epic literature, the result is such a hodge-podge of truth and error that the god depicted represents neither the Vedic, epic, nor Puranic conception, but a fearful mixture of notions drawn from different millenniums. Thus the latest and least authoritative native authors furnish the data which give the outline of Kubēra as pictured in the standard mythology. He is a god having several wives, none of whom is known to any ancient writer; he possesses only eight teeth and has three legs, characteristics opposed to his earlier conception, though perhaps in part retained from traits not formally acknowledged,¹ he has several sons, only one of whom is really known as such; he "receives no worship", whereas he is worshipped in earlier literature; and finally, most of his characteristic traits are ignored altogether. A closer study of the Kubēra (Kabāiras) of early literature will show that this "god" wins his high title late in life and that he is no bad representative on Hindu soil of the Greek Kabeiros-Kobeiros (Kobalos).

In regard to the form of the name, it appears as Kubēra for earlier (*Kabēra) Kābēraka (the ending *-ka* is secondary and is found also in the epic Kubēraka), in which *ē* = *āi*. Native authorities enlist the form with other words in *-ēra*, *guhēra*, *godhēra*, *kaṭhēra*, *kuṭēra*, *gaḍēra*, *guḍēra*, etc., a formation which begins early and till late remains active enough to produce fresh combinations of the same sort, such as *śrāmaṇēra* and *Saṃgamanēra*, the Buddhistic tinge of which, together with the marked linguality of the earlier group, may suggest that forms in *-ēra* were felt to be vulgar rather than acceptable Sanskrit. Professor Wackernagel also explains the form in *u* as a "*mundartliche oder plebeische Form*" (*loc. cit.* p. 316). Yet the *-ēra* words stand in close connection with *-ēru* forms, and these again (*madēru*, *sanēru*, etc.) are merely variants of older or perhaps more elegant forms in *-ara*, *-aru*, and *-ru* (cf. *patēra* = *patara* = *pataru*; also *śatēra* = *śatru*). Other variations also occur, *muhēra* = *muhira*, etc. Some of these are not found in the extant literature, but there is no reason for supposing, for example, that a native scholar made out of whole cloth such words as *gaḍēra*, "cloud" or *daṇśēra*, "harmful". It is with these forms that the word Kubēra is

¹ The three-legged Kubēra is doubtless a phallic conception parallel to the *τρικεῖς ἕδανον* of Theocritus.

grouped, which stands to Kubēra as the similar *guḍēra* stands to *guḍēraka*.¹

But if Kubēra has a vulgar form it is no more than he deserves. For he begins as a vulgar little fellow. His name probably comes from *kub* (as *dañśera* from *dañś*, *guhēra* from *guh*, etc.), to which native authorities assign the word *kubra*, "cover" as hole (cave) and as forest, *kub* itself being explained as "cover over" (*kub*, *kumb*, *ācchādane*). Possibly *kubja*, "bent" may be from the same root. Kubēra then is etymologically a spirit of cover, of hiding. Hence his character as chief Guhyaka (*guh*, "hide"), allied etymologically again with *guhēra* as "blacksmith", with that association of smith and secrecy seen in the case of the Kabirs and other gnomes. Our Kubēra is primarily and above all a Guhyaka-Yakṣa, "hiding-spirit" Kubēra has a son Kūbara (related in ending as *patēra* to *patara* "flyer", bird) to which is prefixed *nala*, as I think for *nara*, sprite, the Naras being spirits belonging especially to the court of Kubēra and associated with him as a peculiar kind of Gandharva-spirit distinct from the *Kim-naras*. The *nara* anyway is a spirit (*Naraka*, "place of spirits"), of water particularly. There is a body of water underground where these water-spirits abound, the noise of running water being the "singing" of the *Kim-naras*, which accompanies the "dancing" of these spirits of cloud and waterfall. *Nala* is identical with *nara* and means a water-plant (cf. *nalina*) or water-sprite (cf. *Nalasetu*). *Nārāyana* means the place of water (spirits).²

The form *Kāubēra* is used of the followers of Kubēra or of his other belongings, or of the drama concerned with his daughter-in-law (Rambhābhisāra, H. 8694), but not of his son (as patronymic).

¹ The AV. form *Kāuvēra* (Kashmir) is not so original as *Kābēra* (v. 1. *Kāvēra*). It is due to an attempt to make a regular patronymic of Kubēra, like *Bhāuvāyana* and *Dhrāuva* from *Bhuva* and *Dhruva*. *Kābēra* reverts to **Kabēra* as *Śābara* to *Śabara*, *Hāleya* to *Hali*, etc. Compare *dāśēra-ka* and *daśēra*, the creature that bites (camel or fish).

² Activity connotes energy and bravery, hence the tertium that connects water and bravery (*puruṣa*, a brave man, *purīṣa*, water, *purīṣya*, of fire as energetic); hence too the (vital) spirit, as an active energy and the hero (Nero, Neria, *νῆρῶν*) on the one hand and Nēreus, water-spirit, on the other. Virtue, activity, is nerve (cf. *guṇa*, sinew and virtue). *Nart*, "dance" is only a special form of activity and is related to the water-idea as *salto* and *saliva* come from *sar* "go", "flow".

The group of beings over whom Kubēra is lord are, as has been said, "hiders", and his most characteristic name in all periods is "lord of the Guhyakas", who are also called the "other people", the old euphemistic designation (equivalent to "good people") of sprites, gnomes, and ghosts. His father is a doubtful personality, who is represented as a great seer or as the son of the Creator-god. His mother is the earth, represented as a cow, whence he is called "son of the cow"; yet another tradition, which had as yet scarcely obtained foothold in the epics, but appears in the subsequent Puranic literature, assigns him a nymph-mother called Ilavilā. He is primarily lord of the spirits who hide (and find) treasure in the mountains. The one son he has lives with him in the hill-country in the North, where, with them, bands of Guhyas or Guhyakas watch all gold and wealth hidden in the hills. Kubēra and his troops are under the patronage of the phallic mountain-god Śiva, to whom Kubēra stands in somewhat the same relation as that occupied in relation to Kubēra himself by his own underling, the great "Jewel"-spirit, whose name appears in full as Maṇi- (or Māni-) bhadra (or -vara), and whose father is declared in the later part of the epic to be "he of the silver navel".¹ It is Śiva who is the mighty god of the North and as such, though the especial friend of Kubēra, as the Mountain-goddess was also his friend (despite the fact that their anger was not restrained when Kubēra was indiscreet), he was historically the cause of Kubēra's remaining an inferior spirit. So rapid is the growth of Kubēra's reputation that, as patron spirit of wealth and treasure, he would undoubtedly have become to the North what Agni became to the East; but in fact he was scarcely able to attain the position of world-protector, and Śiva overshadowed him completely. He is first represented as a sprite of concealment, living on that as his sustenance and associated with similar spirits the "good people", who also are thus nourished by their earth-mother. Earth the shining goddess is their mother, earth (the soil) is their "dish", as contrasted with the "silver" dish (the moon) of the Manes. This is expressed in the following passages of

¹ This epithet is applied to the greater and lesser spirits; probably at first to Śiva and then transferred to Kubēra (cf. *triśiṣṣan* and *triśiṣas*, of Śiva and Kubēra). Cf. Guha as son of Śiva.

the Atharva Veda and the Great Epic, identical passages in variant forms.¹

AV. 8, 10, 28, so 'dakrāmat se 'tarajanān āgacchat tām itarajanā upāhvayanta tirodha ehī 'ti; tasyāh Kubero Vāīsravaṇo vatsa āsīd, āmapātram pātram; tām Rajatanābhih Kābēraḥ 'dhok, tām tirodhām evā 'dhok; tām tirodhām itarajanā upa jīvanti, tiro dhatte sarvam pāpmānam upajīvanīyo bhavati ya evam veda (v. l. puṇya° for itara°).

Mbhā. 7, 69, 24:

antardhānam cā 'mapātre dugdhā puṇyajanāir Virāt,
dogdhā Vāīsravaṇas teṣāṃ vatsas cā 'sīd vṛṣadhvajah
(v. l. in SI. text, cā 'sīt Kuberaḥ).

Harivaṇśa, 382 f.:

Yakṣāis ca śrūyate rājan punar dugdhā vasumdhārā,
āmapātre mahārāja purā 'ntardhānam akṣayam;
vatsam Vāīsravaṇam kṛtvā Yakṣāih puṇyajanāis tadā,
dogdhā Rajatanābhas tu pitā Maṇivarasya yāh,
Yakṣātmaḥ mahātejās triśīrṣaḥ sumahātapaḥ;
tena te vartayantī 'ti paramaṣīr uvāca ha.

About the same time probably as that of the first of these passages is that of the Brāhmaṇa which describes Kubera as lord of Rakṣasas (ŚB. 13, 4, 3, 10) and (or?) *selagas* (*śerabha* "snake"?). Rakṣasas the Hindus regard as brothers or cousins of the Yakṣas, the former being prevailingly evil but sometimes good, the latter prevailingly good but sometimes evil. The Guhyakas are often identified with the Yakṣas, although they occasionally appear as a separate band. In fact, however, Yakṣas are the genus and Guhyakas are the species, as Kinnaras are a species of Gandharvas. All these spirits, of hiding, helping, singing and dancing, together with serpents, dwarfs, personified gem- and jewel-spirits, and "wizard"-spirits, are under Kubera.

Kubera's association with Śiva rests on a deeper basis than the hills where they live together. Both are genii of productivity. This is the reason why Kubera and Iśāna (Śiva) are invoked together and especially "for the husband" at the marriage-ceremony (Śāṅkh. GS. 1, 11, 7). Kubera is god of increase, both of children and wealth. His wife is thus Riddhi, Prosperity, who is recognized as such in the later parts of

¹ Here and in the following I omit the macron over ē, not usually written in Sanskrit words.

the epic; as Lakṣmī is also so closely connected with him that she is associated with Nala-Kūbara at his court, possibly with the idea that she is really Kubera's wife, as was actually imagined in post-epic literature despite Viṣṇu's claim upon the lady. When a man marries and when a man digs for treasure, he makes offerings to Kubera as the spirit of good luck and prosperity in general. But the adoration of Kubera and the offerings made to him were regularly similar to those offered to his coadjutor the Jewel-spirit; though once identified with those offered to a recognized god, namely when the epic hero is digging for treasure.

Kubera is a god, *deva*, only in the later parts of the epic. The view that he was once a man, afterwards raised to god-head, is an exaggeration both of the epic data and of the historical facts. In the epic he is the "king of kings", as is Rāvaṇa the Rakṣas, and he is "chief of kings"; but he is never thought of as a mere man, as he is seldom thought of as a god in the full sense of that term. He is always a Guhyaka "hiding-spirit", one of that spirit-clan to which are assigned dubious characters, such as animals and plants of recognized spirit-power, and in particular the half-gods or half-divine dioscuroi twins (Aśvins), though later (Puranic) tradition asserts definitely enough that Kubera, together with his follower Nandiśvara (also the name of Śiva's follower and of Śiva himself), was a "god with human nature", *manuṣya-prakṛti*, for which there is no basis at all in the early texts. One may assume that all demoniac forms were "degraded tribes" of Hindus; but this opens up a question similar to that as to the interpretation of European fairies as wild men, etc. One might say that the Śabalas are wild demoniac mountaineers and that Kuberas and Śabalas ($k = ś$, $r = l$) were originally one (cf. *kimīdins* and *śimidās* as demons); but that would be guess-work and after all would not help us to determine what the epic Hindus thought of Kubera. Both epics state plainly that Kubera was not at first a god; but godhood was given to him as a special boon.

One other point in regard to a misunderstood tradition. The epic poets call Kubera Naravāhana ("having a vehicle of Naras"), and the later writers interpret this as "carried by men", that is in a palanquin or *narayāna*. One looks in vain, however, for any evidence that Kubera was carried by

men. In post-epical times he rides a buffalo; but that is another comparatively modern touch. The curious thing is that, if *naras* be men, Kubera is described as "carried by men" just when he is not so carried. Like other supernatural beings of the epic, gods, seers, angels, etc., Kubera has his own aeroplane, a very large and roomy car, which was especially presented to him by the Creator, and which has the reputation of being the fastest car on the road of spirits. And yet even as Kubera, who always rides in this car, is stepping into it, the poet calls him *Naravāhana*. But this absurdity is overcome if one remembers that the verb from which comes *vāhana* is used of the spirits called Guhyakas as "carriers" of Kubera's car. "By the Guhyakas", it is said, "is carried, *uhyamānam*, the car of Kubera". In other words, as explained above, the Naras are spirits, and Kubera's car is harnessed by spirits, sometimes described as Guhyakas and sometimes as mysterious horse-like birds or bird-like horses, who yet at the same time are Gandharvas, that is, I suppose, the Naras as singing spirits, half horse and half bird. They "fly" like birds and "neigh victory" like horses and are called Gandharvas as well as Guhyakas, so that there is not much doubt as to what *Naravāhana* in Kubera's case really means, "he who is carried by spirits", though the same word is applied in *naravāhin* to a palanquin used by kings and ladies in its normal human sense. The fearful foe of the gods, Nahuṣa, drove a team of spirit-saints and because they were saints he sinned. Kubera drove a team of his own spirits, who were his servants.

Gold is the metal with which Kubera is especially concerned. In this he differs from the Kabirs, who worked in baser metal, whereas the Northern mountains where Kubera lives are famous for "fair Himālayan mines of gold", not to speak of the gold brought from Hāṭaka, also in the Northern mountains, or of the "gold dug up by ants", which must also have come from the mountains (perhaps from the upper Ganges), because the only time it is mentioned it is spoken of as being brought down by the mountaineers of the North as tribute (to Delhi, as now named).

In connection with this gold (Kubera, by the way, is said to have a "body made of gold"), there is a well-known proverb, which appears half a dozen times in the epic in almost

but not quite identical words and states that a rash and greedy man is like the climber after honey, which is to be got only by scaling cliffs, on the face of which, at the mouth of cliff-caves, the bees build. So the proverb: "He longs for honey but forgets the fall". Now this proverb is applied to a king who has stolen another's wealth and is liable to fall in consequence, and the epic poet likens him to one who seeks to steal the "honey loved of Kubera". Of course the native expounder says that Kubera's pet food is honey, and perhaps it is; but it is worthy of notice that the poet is careful to say nothing about eating. He does not say it is Kubera's food but it is "that (thing) beloved by Kubera", or "Kubera's gold honey", *madhu pītakamākṣikam*, which the Petersburg Lexicon (comparing **suvarṇamākṣikam*) interprets as pyrites, though saffron might just as well be meant, since this also is picked off the cliffs and it is dangerous work for one "who gathers samphire, dreadful trade", whether practiced at Dover, in Lemnos (home of the Kabir!), or in India. Yet the "honey of Kubera" is not on the face of the cliff but in a jar in a cave, and the application of the proverb must lie in the necessity of scaling the cliff to get to the cave. Now in India not only honey but gold is kept in jars, in fact the jar buried underground is the ordinary bank of the Hindu peasant to this day. Thus the allusion, made rather skillfully to what is called "Kubera's honey", is in fact to "the favorite of Kubera", i. e. gold. This gold is described as kept in a cave guarded by dragons (serpents) and he who attains to this, is made happy ever after: "It gives to mortals immortality; it makes the blind see; it restores youth to the aged" (Mbh. 5, 64, 18 f.). Perhaps that is claiming a good deal, even for Kubera's gold, but it is as reasonable as to turn the gold into pyrites; though it might be saffron (*kāvera*, the name suggests this) and it is possible to take Kubera's honey literally as eating may be implied, though not stated. There is something Medean about the restoration to youth which suggests the possibility of a connection with the "dragon-guarded" Fleece, though they may be independent tales, and the Hindu version is perhaps not without conscious twisting to the honey-moral, which is the sole reason why it is dragged into the story. It is a tale which has to be explained by spirit-experts or jugglers with spirits, as if to be taken with a grain of salt

(*vidyājambhaka*vārtika priests, also said to be *jambhasādhakas* ib. 16 and 20) and is told for edification rather than for belief. The moly (of Hermes) may also be compared with "Kubera's Gold", if it should prove to be a plant.

Another mark of Kubera is his interest, one might almost say ownership, in the "playground of the gods". For though this is recognized as "the gods' playground" in general, yet in particular it is called "the playground of Kubera". This is almost a foregone conclusion, since it is Kubera who possesses the mountain-top on which the playground is found. But the only play known to the gods is the dance, and this is the real meaning of *ā-kṛīḍa* (*kṛīḍ* "play" is really the same with *kūrd*, "leap, play, dance"; cf. Grk. *kordax*). The *ākṛīḍ-abhūmi*, "ground for dancing", is also said to belong to the spirits who especially act as attendants of Kubera, probably the spirits of dancing waters. One of Kubera's spritelike characteristics is his trick of keeping spellbound a chance visitor from the earth, who is travelling through the hill-country and suddenly comes upon the "lake of lotuses of gold", near Kubera's home. Kubera receives him very politely and immediately proposes to entertain him with an exhibition of dance and music given by his attendant nymphs and musicians. At the end of the "divine year" during which the performance lasts, the guest hurries away, realizing for the first time the passage of time. As he departs, Kubera says, rather dryly, "Yes, this music is a very captivating thing" (*hāryo 'yaṁ gāndharvaḥ*) and lets him go (Mbh. 13, 19, 33 f.).

Among the regular attendants of Kubera are the Nāgas or *mahoragas*, the cobra-serpents famous for stealing and hiding jewels. If Kubera has more to do with gold than with iron or copper, it is not because he is never conceived as a smith, *guhera*, but because he is rather a Guyaka than a *guhera*; that is, he conceals gold and jewels rather than manufactures things from metal, though one tradition has it that he made his own palace, which is all of gold-work. But another tradition says that this palace was made by the "All-maker", and it is this figure of the All-maker which has put Kubera aside as a fashioner, as it has put aside Agni the fire-god as a companion to Vulcan, though now and then Indra or some other god takes the All-maker's place and is represented as himself the maker of arms and palaces. Never-

theless, both in the matter of gold and in that of jewels, Kubera has to do both with fire and with serpents. Thus one of the regents of the constellation under which a successful search for treasure may be prosecuted is the Serpent of the Depth, Ahi Budhnya, and the treasure is found through the combined aid of Agni and Kubera.¹

The fact that the Serpent of the Depth presides over the finding of treasure, has several bearings of interest. In the first place it suggests the relation between Kubera and the serpents in general. As inhabitants of holes, underground palaces, etc., snakes are looked upon both as guarding and as stealing treasure, especially jewels. The case of the Diamond Necklace is not more famous in modern literature than was the case of The Queen's Ear-rings in India, stolen by the king of serpents. Likeness also illustrates the connection between jewels and snakes, "brilliant as the golden stone guarded by serpents", etc. It is these serpents that are part of the retinue of Kubera, though he himself is not in any way serpent-like; but since he is *guhya* or *guhyaka*, the "Concealing" Nāgas are associated with him.

Another bearing of the fact regarding the Serpent of the Depth is that, as Kubera's treasure is found by men, so Kubera himself in turn is presented by the great god Śiva, his particular friend, with one quarter of all the wealth of the golden mountain (Meru), and it is thus that men eventually get it through the aid of Kubera, Fire, and Wind (which clearly indicate a sort of Vulcan with forge and bellows); for Kubera himself first gets out the treasure, which in this case is the gold of the hills, and then out of that which the supreme god of the mountains, Śiva, has allowed him, he gives one sixteenth to man. Analogy between the luck-spirit and the Hellenic god of luck is evident; but there is no special connection between the names or functions of Kubera and

¹ Possibly Kubera had to do originally with *kupya*, copper and other base metals, as well as with gold. This word (ascribed in PW. to *kup*, as irascendum, or "metal easily moved") may be from **kup*, "shine", and is possibly represented by the "copper-isle", Kypros, which is as likely to have been named "copper-land" as copper is likely to have been named "Cyprus-stuff". So the Kassiterides were named from their metal (Sk. *kastīra* is a late loan word). A parallel may be found in *śābara*, "copper" from Śabara, mountaineer, as "mountain-stuff".

Hermes, and except for his association with Wind and Fire, Kubera has no likeness with Hephaistos.

The luck-function of Kubera and his kind stands of course in direct connection with that attribute of Kubera and the "good-people" which is the most conspicuous trait on his first appearance (in the Vedic text cited above) and on which the epic poets are never weary of harping. Kubera has "disappearance" as his very sustenance; he and his followers live on it, that is, like the goblins of other lands, they disappear at will; but also, as they disappear (fading out of sight, as one epic poet says, "like fata morgana"), so too they appear at will; and lastly, also like gnomes of other lands, things which have disappeared they can make appear to plain view. This they do by the application of magic, as when Kubera lets appear for an aged saint, who according to a third tradition of his birth is his own grandfather, a complete phantasmagoria of his beloved gardens and parks; or, again, by letting a mortal use some magic water, "and when he uses it he shall see all concealed things". This is what Kubera did for the hero Rāma, sending him a bottle of this magic eye-wash by a Guhyaka servant (Mbh. 3, 289, 9).

It may be asked whether there is any probability that the "good people" associated with Kubera are ghosts. I think not. Both in the Veda and in the epic the Yakṣas and other fairies are kept distinct from the Manes. It is a later tradition (still obtaining in Ceylon and India) which confuses "Yakkas" with the ghosts of the dead. Thus in the Atharva Veda, "the Fathers (ghosts) and the good people" are distinguished from each other, as both together are distinguished from the gods (AV. 8, 8, 15, etc.). Exactly so in the Great Epic, *Guhyāḥ pitṛganāḥ sapta*, "Guhyakas and the seven groups of Fathers" (3, 3, 43) are differentiated, as in another passage (7, 69, 10 f.) "the seven seers, the good people and the Fathers". The Guhyakas, except as messengers, rarely leave their hills, though they occasionally join the host of gods demons, Fathers, and spirits who watch and admire a conflict of men; but unique is the notion that Guhyakas are among the luminous bodies of heaven, though even there they are differentiated from the equally luminous souls of departed saints which shine as stars on high. Such an isolated bit of poetic fancy cannot impugn the value of the current view,

that the Guhyakas, of whom Kubera is one and the chief, are earth-goblins, who belong to the shrinking class of hiding sprites. That they are not very martial spirits, like their cousin or brother Rakṣasas, may be gathered from the fact that cowardly soldiers do not go to the world of Indra, the god of battles, but to the "world of Guhyakas" (11, 26, 12 f.), though to get even to this place they must at least be killed with a sword, and not "killed anyway"; otherwise they go to the land of the peace-loving (not martial) Hyperboreans (Northern Kurus). Kubera's own world, in the formal enumeration of all possible worlds of spirits and gods, stands almost at the bottom of the list, only one degree higher in fact than the world of Death (Yama), which of course is underground. It is thus located far below the world of the real gods and turns out on examination to be in fact nothing save the mountain-region round the upper reaches of the Ganges (his paradise of Alakā), final indication of the essentially earthly, if not chthonic¹, nature of this goblin, who, though in time he became "king of kings", "god", and "guardian of the North", became thus exalted ever with the clear understanding that divinity was given him because he "clove to the Father-god" and was virtuous, instead of siding with his brothers, the Rakṣa-giants, who strove against the gods.

Kubera changes his form but once. That is when the gods and good spirits are all frightened at the onslaught of these same giants or fiends and take the shape of animals, "thousand-eyed Indra" naturally becoming the peacock (which explains why that bird still has a thousand eyes in its tail), Kubera becoming the chameleon (which explains why the chameleon is of such brilliant hues). Perhaps, however, the connection of thought originally was in the association of the chameleon also with holes, and hiding-places; for *godhā*, chameleon, is derived by native scholars (perhaps correctly) from the same root *gudh*, *guh*, *κεῖθω*, from which comes Guhyaka.

Though Kubera has only one spirit-son, Nala-Kūbara, the Rāmāyaṇa assigns him an incarnation in the shape of the monkey called Gandhamādana. As this is also the name of Kubera's favorite mountain, the tale may be due to confusion of thought or conscious feeling of appropriateness, especially

¹ Cf. the "Banyan-tree of Vessavaṇa", Mahāvāṇśa, 10, 89.

since Kubera seems to be an afterthought, the original story being that Yama and not Kubera was sire of the incarnated divinity called "Gandhamādana the ape". This fact is not without further significance. The later inclusion of Kubera when the gods are called upon to reincarnate themselves in earthly forms to fight against the giant fiends, shows what was thought of Kubera. He was not primarily one of the great *devas* who so incorporated themselves. But later he was assigned a son, on earth, as were the other gods, because he was then risen to the position of guardian god.

Nala-Kūbara, the only real son of Kubera, is a spirit noted for his grace and good manners in the non-epic but popular tradition of the Jains, as was his father for beauty in the same cycle. Preller (fourth ed., p. 858) supposes that the epithet *καλλίπαις*, given to the Lesbian Kabeiros, implies (one son) Hermes, a doubtful suggestion at most; but in any event it is curious that Kubera's one son should be a model of the grace for which Hermes stands as type (*kūbara* itself is said to mean "charming"). This son of Kubera wed the "fairest of nymphs", Rambhā, who was turned into a rock, like Niobe, for certain indiscretions less innocent than those of her Hellenic companion in suffering. She doubtless belongs to the large class of those petrified spirits, which are found all over earth, from India and the Pillar of Salt to the stones of South America which "once were men" but died for impiety and still "look like men". Instead of men, women and spirits are the favorite victims in India.

The attention paid in the Great Epic of India to the lower mythology is in marked contrast to the indifference displayed toward this most valuable survival of antiquity both in Greek epic poetry and in earlier Brahmanic poetry with the exception of the Atharva Veda. Elsewhere we pick up as we can what the poet has unconsciously let fall. Here we find the lower mythology itself presented as worthy of regard. Thus Kubera himself, as a superior goblin become a god, is naturally *fêted*, but also his humble followers are given name and place, sometimes both, often only the name or only the place. I have already pointed out that the attendant spirits of Śiva have names reflecting Kubera's own essential characteristics. It remains to speak of the many little followers of Kubera who are referred to by name, unfortunately

seldom of much significance, and of the enumeration of shrines sacred to the female followers of Kubera. There are several of these lady fairies or goblinettes who have renowned "bathing-places", that is, shrines at a river, where one may offer prayers or bathe, for the good of his life if not of his soul. At one of these shrines to a Yakṣiṇī, one is said to "obtain all his wishes", while at another, if one only bathes there (it is a sort of Kurhaus), one is freed from all ills and evils, even "the ill (evil) of slaying a priest". Both Kubera and his attendant Maṇivara are, so to speak, patron saints of the travelling merchants, whose misfortunes are spoken of so often in Buddhist stories. These doubtless did much to elevate the rôle of Kubera and his attendants, the Yakṣas and Yakṣiṇīs or Yakṣiṇīs, to whom the caravaners prayed and raised shrines. It will be remembered in the tale of Nala that the master of the caravan at once assumes that Damayantī may be the goddess of the place, either of the forest or "of this mountain", or a Yakṣī or a Rākṣasī and, believing her to be "goddess or fairy", first calls upon her "*kuru naḥ svasti*", "give us weal"¹ and then, when he finds she is only human, concludes with the prayer, "Maṇibhadra, king of Yakṣas, have mercy upon us". This "Jewel"-spirit shares with Kubera the title "king of Yakṣas" (fairies); but very likely Kubera stole it from him as an extension of his own proper title, "king of gnomes" (Guhyakas); for though Kubera becomes the lord of the Yakṣas as well as the lord of all the Kinnaras and other spirits of this ilk, yet this is simply an illustration of his gradual evolution into a god. For example, the technical title, Kinnarēśvara, "lord of Kinnaras" is not actually given to him till a later period than that in which he is spoken of as (informally) master of these spirits, just as he is not actually called a god till the later epic. He is made a god and so he is made lord and king of Yakṣas, but by nature he is lord of Guhaykas and Rakṣasas, spirits "concealing" and "guarding" (also "injuring"). From this point, with the advance in trade and exploration, Kubera rises to be lord of all the

¹ It is not to be taken for granted that a fairy Yakṣī will be kindly disposed, though this is usually the case. There is such a thing as "possession by a Yakṣa", which drives one mad, or makes ill, etc. When roused to anger even a female saint may act like a fiend.

fairies and spirits and “guardian of the North”. When he gets to that point he inevitably becomes the “god of the North” though still by grace of Śiva, his friend and over-lord.

Rubensohn, in his *Mysterienheiligtümer in Eleusis und Samothrake*, after saying very reasonably that both names and number of the Kabeiroi are still quite doubtful, suggests that further investigation may enable us to trace these spirits to their “Phoenician origin”, and then sums up what we really know about them: “es sind chthonische Gottheiten, die in einem gewissen Verwandtschaftsgrad zur Kybele standen” (p. 128).

But Rubensohn, like his predecessors, imagines that the Kabeiroi were attached to the cults of Dionysos or Hephaistos because they were “not quite at home” in Hellas, failing to see that the lower mythological figures are never quite at home in the companionship of finer and loftier gods, not because these gods are necessarily racially distinct but because they represent a different civilization in which, to survive at all, the lower must cling to the higher. That has always been the case. That the Kabeiroi are accidentally attached to the mother-goddess Rhea is as much an assumption as that they were accidentally attached to Kybele. Their connection with Kybele is that of the gnome to its cave; their attachment to Rhea is through Kybele, who was identified with a higher conception of the earth-mother. It is also with the mountain “mothers” of the Śiva-cult that the Hindu counterpart of the Greek Kabeiros has closest connection, for these mothers too are mountain-spirits and their names are in part identical with Kubera’s. Vittadā, Vasudā¹, Piṅākṣī, called “mother” spirits in the cult of Śiva, are merely Kubera’s titles, “wealth-giver”, etc., in a feminine form; as his own titles, “lord of beings” (spirits), are in part those of Śiva himself. Kubera (= Kabairas) is in fact a pigmy Śiva, as Śiva is a monstrous over-grown Kabairas. The spirit of the cave, the hiding spirit, who is guardian of treasure, lord of treasure-trove, and whose rôle as spirit of increase covers also

¹ Vasudā is also “earth”. Parallel forms are Vasudhārā, Vasudharā, Vasumdhārā, of which the first is one of the names given later to “Kubera’s city”, while all three forms designate the Buddhist goddess known as the wife of Kubera Jambhalou. Compare A. Foucher, *Étude sur l’Iconographie bouddhique de l’Inde*.

productivity (as genius invoked “for the man” in marriage), whose Guhya-name is reflected in the *guhera*, “smith”, *loha-ghātaka*, is as near a counterpart to the Greek Kabeiros as could be wished. The Kabeiroi also were eventually reckoned as “great gods”. The part of the Kobāloi, the mischievous sprites hiding in the house rather than in the mountain-cave, is not so obvious in the epic; but literature outside of and older than the epics shows that the “servants of Kubera” were particularly annoying to children, and these must have been house-spirits who plagued children (as described in Hiraṇ. GS. 2, 1, 3, 7; not included in the list at Pārask. GS. 1, 16, 23), as did Śiva’s evil mother-spirits.

That Kubera is not mentioned in the solemn literature devoted to the great gods is not a proof that he was unknown to the early age of the first Vedas. He was not yet divine. It took a long time for him to become a god, but finally he achieved this and as god of the North became even a witness-god in the law-courts. If Śiva had been as non-local as Viṣṇu, Kubera would probably have taken his place as great god of the North. As it was, he remained at best a respectable *deva*, whose cult was largely augmented by the growth of commerce. As a god it was felt that he ought to be good-looking and so the epics represent him, beautiful, luminous, glorious to see. But probably the concurrent conception of him as a goblin, and goblins are seldom beautiful, resulted in the eventual triumph of the opposite view that he was deformed, perhaps *kubja* (see above), “bent”, with too few teeth and too many legs. Then, instead of referring Kubera to *kub*, the wise men invented the word *vera*, gave it the meaning “body” and interpreted Kubera as *ku-vera*, “having a vile body”. The beginning of this is found in the last (latest) book of the Rāmāyaṇa, which explains that Kubera became jaundiced in one eye, because he indiscreetly looked at the Mountain-goddess when she was occupied with Śiva, her husband; a tale which, while it looks forward to Kubera’s later ugliness, also reverts to his character as a Peeping Tom, or gnome. His later title, “Lord of Love”, is connected with his attributes as marriage-divinity; for which reason also he is closely united with the amorous Gandharvas.